

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

On page 1, please amend the paragraph beginning on line 4 as follows:

This application is a continuation-in-part of ~~prior~~ PCT/US00/29038, filed October 19, 2000, which in turn is a continuation-in-part of Application No. 09/550,399, filed April 14, 2000, now abandoned, which in turn is a continuation-in-part of Application No. 09/392,074, filed September 8, 1999, now abandoned, which in turn is a continuation of Application No. 09/039,150, filed March 13, 1998, now abandoned, which in turn claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/040,556, filed March 13, 1997. In addition, this Application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Applications Serial Nos. 60/129,595, filed April 15, 1999; 60/141,569, filed June 29, 1999; 60/144,400, filed July 16, 1999; 60/148,227, filed July 27, 1999; 60/149,938, filed August 19, 1999; [60/152, 677] 60/152,677, filed September 7, 1999; 60/154,068, filed September 14, 1999; 60/160,445, filed October 19, 1999; and [60/175, 372] 60/175,372, filed January 10, 2000.

Page 310, line 5, please delete the abstract, and replace with the following paragraph:

The invention is related to methods of processing and packaging meat. During the course of processing or packaging meat, the meat is exposed to a gas wherein the majority of said gas comprises gas other than air. Various alternatives exist with regard to combining, measuring, blending, packaging, and testing the meat.